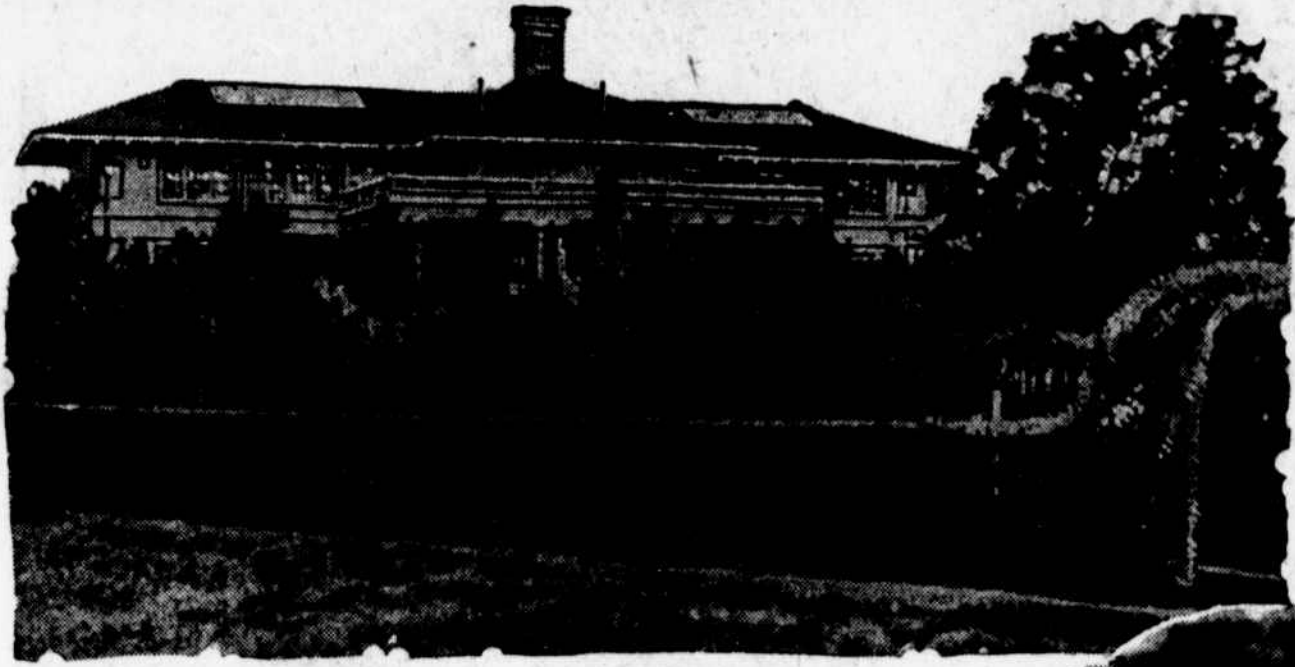


The Servant Girl Thief Who Stole \$250,000 in Three Years

And How the Old-Fashioned Burglar with His "Jimmy" and Dark Lantern Has Been Side-Trackd by the "Finders," a New Kind of Criminal Who Enters the Homes of the Rich as a Highly Efficient Servant and Robs at Leisure



The Home of the Willard D. Straights, at Fashionable Aiken, N. C., from Which Jewels Worth Many Thousands of Dollars Were Stolen, the Police Now Think, by a "Finder," the New and Dangerous Criminal.

IN his latest report upon the work of his department, Police Commissioner Enright, of New York, calls especial attention to a brand-new type of criminal whom he calls "the finders," and whose activities may account for many puzzling jewel robberies in the houses of the rich.

A "finder," the Commissioner explains, is a thief who enters a house in the guise of a servant—nurse maid, governess, cook, chauffeur, butler and so on—by means of forged or stolen references. Once inside he or she proceeds to find where the valuables are kept, and also to find the best time to make away with them. Hence the interesting name given them—"the finders."

The "finders" have, in fact, largely superseded the crude, old-fashioned burglar with his jimmy and blackjack and flashlight and pistol. Instead of coming through the skylight or jimmying open a door or window, they boldly enter by the front or, at least, the servants' entrance. Instead of having to look hurriedly around for jewel box or safe, they can take all the time they want to locate them. And instead of having to listen for a policeman's step or noise of an aroused house owner, they can study the comings and goings in the place and learn just exactly the safest and best time to "make the getaway."

Furthermore, they are good servants—of excellent address, respectful and efficient. They study their jobs. Why not—when it would be wicked waste of time to suffer discharge for inefficiency before they made off with the jewels or could tip off a confederate as to the exact hour when it would be safe to drop in for them.

Adding to the dangerous character of this new kind of criminal is the fact that they are, superficially at least, well educated. They can intelligently contemplate the needs of an employer and make themselves—by contrast with the average stupid, impudent, slip-shod servant—invaluable.

All of which is necessary preface to the story of one of the most remarkable of these "finders," Madame Antoinette Bureau, whose career was checked just the other day by a sentence of from five to ten years' imprisonment in Auburn State prison, Auburn, N. Y. Before Madame Bureau, who was known by many other names, was tripped up by the police she managed to steal at least a quarter of a million dollars in gems and other treasures from those who employed her. This, too, in the space of three short years!

All the people whom Antoinette robbed spoke enthusiastically of her superior qualities as nurse maid, plain maid, lady's maid or whatever it was she hired out to do. But \$250,000 in three years represents \$7,000 a month. It would seem that one ought to get even perfect servant service for that sum.

It was the day after Thanksgiving that Mrs. Edward Hyams, wife of a well-known New York attorney, received a call from a neat, pleasant looking, demurely dressed person who said her name was Marie Clark and that she had come in answer to an advertisement which Mrs. Hyams had inserted offering a place for a maid.

Mrs. Hyams was impressed with her visitor. She liked her quaint French accent, too. She was further impressed when looking at the recommendation the maid had handed her, she saw it was signed by Mrs. Benjamin Duveen, wife of the well-known art collector and importer.

It was an excellent recommendation. And Mrs. Hyams, as many other women had done, it afterward transpired, thought there could be no better. Here was Mrs. Duveen, about whose home priceless art objects must always be lying, vouching for this maid's honesty and capability. There could be no place where a dishonest servant, all things considered, would have such opportunity as in a house like the Duveens'. That the girl before her had successfully resisted all temptations there seemed to make it certain that she was pure gold.

So "Marie" was hired. Her work was excellent. In fact, Mrs. Hyams thought that she was the best maid she ever had—an addition to her staff of domestics of

whom to be proud. Her consternation was acute, therefore, when, three days later, "Marie" suddenly vanished, taking with her about eighteen hundred dollars' worth of valuables, including two watches, opera glasses, a necklace, silverware, expensive imported laces and a ball gown!

A few days later Mrs. Roslyn Fox, the wife of George Fox, a wealthy manufacturing furrier of New York, appeared at Police Headquarters and told a story similar, except for a slight variation, to the one told to the police by Mr. Hyams a few days previous. As in the former case, "Marie Clark" had come in answer to an advertisement and had presented the reference from Mrs. Duveen. She told Mrs. Fox that she could communicate with the Duveens at Atlantic City and gave an address there. The girl was hired and Mrs. Fox dispatched a special delivery letter to what she thought was the address of the Duveens in Atlantic City. When the letter was returned for a correct address she questioned "Marie" about it. The girl told her that the letter had been misdirected and gave her another address, much similar to the first.

Between the hours of two and four the next morning "Marie" disappeared, taking with her a fur coat, a hand bag, a pair of opera glasses, silverware and linens—all to the value of two thousand dollars. A few hours after the maid had left Mrs. Fox

Beautiful Mrs. Willard D. Straight, the Loss of Whose Costly Gems Is One of the Unsolved Mysteries of Crime.



Mme. Antoinette Bureau, the "Finder" Who Stole \$250,000 in Three Years.

received a telegram from Hoboken, N. J. It read: "Good-by and thank you. 'MARIE CLARK.'"

Other complaints had come in and the detectives decided to see Mrs. Duveen about that recommendation. Mrs. Duveen said that the Marie Clark whom she had once employed had left her during the Summer of 1920, after a period of employment extending over two years. From her the detectives learned that Marie Clark was then employed by a lady who lived at the Hotel Langdon.

At the Hotel Langdon Mrs. Fox, who had accompanied the detectives, met the real Marie Clark, and, of course, she was nothing like the "Marie" who had given her such costly service.

But they did run across some interesting information. Marie Clark, looking over her references, discovered that the one from Mrs. Duveen was missing! Cudgelling her brains for some possible explanation, she recalled that a woman who had once worked with her had visited her one day some months back.

This old acquaintance was named Antoinette Bureau, and Miss Clark had met her back in 1918 at the home of Mrs. William Bamberger, of Park avenue, New York. Madame Bureau had just come over from Belgium. Had she shown her the Duveen recommendation at that time? Miss Clark was sure she hadn't. But she recalled that she had left her alone in the apartment for a few minutes. It was possible that during that time the recommendation might have been stolen.

But Miss Clark wouldn't believe such a thing of Mme. Bureau. Why, if she were doing such tricks wouldn't she be hid-

ing? And she wasn't. She was living right now in her apartment at No. 129 West Sixtieth street.

Detectives Robert Dugan, William Ornstein and Oscar Krause, of the West One Hundred and Fifty-second street station, verified this information.

Confronted and identified by Mrs. Fox, however, she collapsed and admitted her guilt.

When, about a half-hour after, Mr. Hyams identified her as the maid who had suddenly left his home coincident with the disappearance of his wife's valuables, the Belgian woman confessed to that theft also. Nothing of value was found in her apartments. She later told her inquisitors that she had accomplished the disposal of her loot through a sailor friend who was employed on a steamship sailing between this country and Belgium. According to her, her accomplice was innocent and did not know that she was a thief; therefore she would not reveal his name.

On the following day, when she was arraigned on a charge of grand larceny, thirty complainants, whose losses aggregated one hundred thousand dollars, appeared and identified Madame Bureau. Beside these, according to the police, there were others whose losses aggregated about \$150,000 more.

The person to suffer the greatest loss through the peculiar talents of the Bureau woman was Mrs. Mary B. Tolfree, of 51 West Forty-ninth street. Jewelry to the estimated value of between eighteen and

twenty thousand dollars disappeared from the wall safe in her dressing room simultaneously with Madame Bureau's exit. She had employed the maid, who came in answer to a newspaper advertisement, early in April, 1919. Impressed by the appearance of the woman, who then gave the name of Jean Bureau, she directly hired her, deciding to investigate the references later.

The references proved to be forgeries, but that fact was discovered too late, for the new maid left three days after her installation in the service quarters of Mrs. Tolfree's home, taking with her the jewels. Ten days after Madame Bureau's hurried exodus Mrs. Tolfree received a telegram from her, saying that the sender was sorry for the inconvenience she had caused by leaving without notice, but as she was sailing for Belgium the action was unavoidable.

Mrs. Bureau denied taking Mrs. Tolfree's jewels, but admits that after leaving the house of the latter she sailed for Europe. This admission is substantiated by a passport found among her effects by the police. It is dated May 22, 1919, and was issued by the American Consul at Brussels.

The date on the passport indicates that its owner's sojourn in Belgium was not a long one. The jewels, which, according to Mrs. Tolfree, were not insured, including two diamond rings, a pearl necklace and a diamond bar pin. None has ever been recovered.

The second largest haul that this accomplished "finder" is known to have made is one of ten thousand dollars from Mrs. David Bandler, the beautiful wife of the very well-known New York lawyer.

Three days after employing "Marie" Mrs. Bandler left her apartment for about an hour. When she returned she found that "Marie" had gone, but paid no attention to that fact, believing the maid was out walking. When the latter did not return in more than an hour Mrs. Bandler went to her jewel box, which she kept in the top drawer of her dressing table. The jewels—a diamond necklace, a string of pearls with a diamond clasp, a diamond cluster ring, a miniature set with a picture



"It was an excellent reference that 'Marie' presented. Here was Mrs. Duveen, wife of the exceedingly well-known art importer, vouching for her honesty. Mrs. Duveen's home must be filled with priceless art objects easy to steal. That 'Marie' had resisted the temptation showed how honest she must be. So the prospective mistress argued—to her cost, alas, later!"

Mrs. John Wanamaker Jr., Who, With Other Fashionables at Newport, Were the Prey, the Police Now Believe, of "Finders."



of the family, and many other trinkets which had been placed there, were missing.

Mrs. Max Herbert, of No. 270 Riverside Drive, lost \$1,800 in jewels when Antoinette Bureau, posing as Marie Clark, suddenly left the Summer home of the Herberts, at Mamaroneck, N. Y., on Thursday, July 21, of last year. In this case she did not use the stolen reference, but presented one stating that she had been employed in Chicago by a person who, upon investigation, proved to be a character of her imagination. Before Mrs. Herbert became aware of that fact "Marie" left, taking a diamond ring and a gold mesh bag. She had been employed on July 17, and during her four days with Mrs. Herbert created the impression of being an ideal maid.

Mrs. E. B. Elsing, of No. 160 West Seventy-sixth street, was the next to suffer through the Bureau woman's operations. On September 28, of last year, after staying with Mrs. Elsing ten days—ten blissful days to Mrs. Elsing—she left the house, saying that she was going to buy a pair of corsets.

After waiting several hours for the servant to return Mrs. Elsing went to her bureau drawer and found that two rings, worth two thousand dollars, that she had placed there, were missing.

Five thousand dollars was the toll paid by Mr. William Merrick, a large real estate operator, of No. 499 Crown street, Brooklyn.

These are but a few of those with whom Madame Bureau sought employment, stayed for a few days and then with monotonous certainty left sorrowing for treasures that disappeared with her.

Madame Bureau remains a mystery. Inquiry in the neighborhood of her Sixtieth street home brought word that she had apparently led a quiet, uneventful life, with a good record among those living nearby. Her neighbors understood, they say, that she hired out as a houseworker two or three days at a time. She attended church regularly and to them was a very religious woman.

In sentencing her, Judge McIntyre said: "While we have no record of previous convictions against you, Madame Bureau, the Court is convinced that you are a hardened criminal. I have before me two letters, both from victims of your nefarious activities. One of these victims lost valuables to the amount of \$11,000; the other to the amount of \$5,000. They did not appear against you at your trial because they did not believe that the publicity which they would receive would be worth the slight chance they have of recovering the valuables you have taken from them. These letters do not influence me in your case, but they do indicate that there are many others than those who have appeared against you who have suffered through your criminal bent."

There are many mysterious robberies similar to these which still baffle solution. The thefts at fashionable Aiken a few years ago, in which Mrs. Willard D. Straight lost many thousands of dollars' worth of gems, is a notable instance. So is that which occurred at Newport, in which Mrs. John Wanamaker, Jr., and other society notables lost many jewels.

Were these robberies the work of a "finder" such as Mme. Bureau?